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ABSTRACT

To assess the relationship between the way graduating journalists perceive the profession of journalism and the way graduates find it to be in reality, a 61-item questionnaire was administered to 212 graduating seniors at two Kansas universities and to 213 news-editorial graduates of the ten years preceding the study. The nine areas of concern were the use of copy written by reporters, relationship with staff, ethics and professionalism, pay and fringe benefits, relationship with management, status of the journalist on the newspaper and in the community, occupational duties, philosophy of the publication, and job satisfaction. Among the major findings were that working newspersons found they had more autonomy, a better working relationship with colleagues and management, a higher status on the paper and in the community and, in general, a better working environment than pregraduates expected. There were significant differences in the perceptions of the two groups regarding all nine areas of concern except job satisfaction: pregraduates perceived that they would be happy in their jobs, and this proved to be the case with the graduates. (Tables of results, comments from graduates, and the questionnaire used in the study are included.) (GW)

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PERCEIVED VS. REAL WORLD ATTITUDES OF KANSAS JOURNALISTS

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PERCEIVED VS. REAL WORLD ATTITUDES OF KANSAS JOURNALISTS*

By Jim R. Morris and Carol E. Oukrop

It is well known that the journalism profession--especially newspapers--has long had difficulty attracting and holding qualified persons. Duncan sounded the alarm in 1953 when in the first annual survey of employment conditions among journalism graduates deans of journalism schools reported: "You're losing out to other media and to other journalism-oriented fields, notably PR, in the bidding for the crop."[1] In a 1959 survey of the same type, Duncan noted that the early warning had become a "strong and persistent theme."[2]

In a 1966 survey to determine why Canadians leave newspaper jobs Wilson included these comments from respondents:

> ...you occasionally have some of the old timers tell you "when I was a young man we had to work 25 hours a day, eight days a week." Bully for them. Society doesn't work that way anymore.
>
> ...daily newspapermen...feel they are being professionally prostituted; they are not working for some high principle so much as a fast buck for the proprietor.
>
> Most publishers prefer to accept second-class work from poorly qualified persons at low pay rather than first-class work from a qualified person who demands a decent wage.[3]

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[1] Charles T. Duncan, "Newspapers Slipping As No. 1 Outlet for Journalism Graduates," Journalism Quarterly, 36:476-78 (Fall 1959) p. 476.

[2] Ibid., p. 476.

[3] C. Edward Wilson, "Why Canadian Newsmen Leave Their Papers," Journalism Quarterly, 43:769-72 (Winter 1966) p. 770-71.

*The authors are indebted to Dr. Del Brinkman, dean of the Kansas University School of Journalism, for his help and cooperation in making this study possible.

Where do they go? Nayman, McKee and Lattimore in a study of Colorado journalists and public relations persons, reported a willingness of journalists to go into public relations and cited higher pay as a primary reason for doing so.[4]

Jeffers offered another possible reason as he notes the degree of mutual respect that journalists and PR practitioners have for each other:

> ...newsmen evaluate the ethics of specific practitioners significantly higher than practitioners in general (familiarity seems to breed respect).[5]

One must inevitably accept the fact that journalists are leaving newspaper jobs in significant numbers. Additionally, many persons educated for news-editorial jobs never enter them. That they choose public relations as an alternate profession is logical, given the similar skills required for each.

Perhaps the greater question that needs to be investigated is how, or why, journalists become disenchanted with their chosen careers.

Other researchers have attempted to determine what lured young persons into journalism as a career. Bowers reported that, as a career, journalism attracted students because it is interesting work and useful to society.[6] He found, also, that "while 55% anticiapted newspaper reporting and editing jobs upon graduation, only 30% saw themselves working for newspapers after five years."[7]

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[4]Oguz Nayman, McKee and Lattimore, "PR Personnel and Print Journalists: A Comparison of Professionalism," Journalism Quarterly, 54:492-97 (Autumn, 1977) p. 493.

[5]Dennis W. Jeffers, "Performance Expectations as a measure of Relative Status of News and PR People, Journalism Quarterly, 54:299-306 (Summer 1977) p. 305.

[6]Thomas A. Bowers, "Student Attitudes Toward Journalism as a Major and a Career," Journalism Quarterly, 61:265-70 (Summer, 1974) p. 267.

[7]Ibid., P. 366.

Fedler and Taylor found that journalism does not attract a better quality of student than other disciplines.[8]

Sandman, Rubin and Sachman, authors of Media, wrote that "...the best college students don't major in journalism, the best journalism majors don't go into the media, the best media people don't work for newspapers, and the best newspapermen quit."[9]

This study was concerned with the possible discrepencies in what students perceived the world of journalism would be like and what working journalists had discovered the world was in reality.

Could it be that journalists are finding realities in a career that are vastly different from what they were told they would be? And if this is the case, should journalism teachers alter the content of their presentations? For example, should a teacher attempt to paint a starkly real picture of the journalism profession: "Accept it as it is and live with it," or should the teacher teach the professional ideal: "This is the way it should be; change it"?

From the teacher's viewpoint the latter approach seems to be the one to take. But what about the idealistic journalist we send out into the real world--are we really doing right by him? Are teachers, in fact, part of the cause for attrition from news-editorial jobs?

Schwartz suggests essentially the same perplexing dilemma:

> The general impression of newsmen given by the literature is that of driven, committed individuals whose primary orientation is journalistic. Although this was true yesterday and, to an extent, today, will it be tomorrow? Will journalists remain work-oriented? Perhaps the answer to "what makes a good journalist?" lies in other directions.[10]

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[8]Fred Fedler and Taylor, "Does Journalism Attract Quality Students?" Journalism Quarterly, 53:522-27 (Autumn 1976) p. 526.

[9]Peter Sandman, David Rubin, David Sachsman, Media, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972) p. 240.

[10]Stuart H. Schwartz, "Tomorrow's Journalists: Control by Purposive Selection," Journalism Quarterly, 53:538-40 (Autumn 1976) p. 538.

Hypotheses

Hypotheses developed for this study were concerned with the relationship between how graduating journalists from Kansas State and Kansas University perceived the profession they were soon to enter and how they found it to be in reality. Special emphasis was devoted to (1) use of copy, (2) relationship with staff and editors, (3) ethics and professionalism, (4) pay and fringe benefits, (5) relationship with management, (6) status of the journalist on the paper and in the community, (7) job performance, (8) philosophy of the publication and (9) job satisfaction.

Generally, it was hypothesized that there would be a significant difference in the perceptions of graduating K-State-KU journalists and the real world experiences of K-State-KU graduates employed in news-editorial positions.

Specifically, hypotheses were formulated for each of the areas cited above. For example: 1. There will be a significant difference in the perceptions of graduating K-State-KU journalists and the real world experiences of K-State-KU graduates on each item of the instrument designed to determine how copy submitted by newspersons will be/is handled...

Limitations and Basic Assumptions of the Study

1. This study was subject to all the various limitations concomitant to research data collected by mailed questionnaires--such as failure of the respondent to answer all items, and failure of many to respond.

2. This study did not attempt to determine why each respondent answered a certain way, only that he did answer as indicated.

3. While there are many instances where it applies, this is not a pre-test, post-test study. Questionnaires were sent to graduates from 10 or fewer years past in order to obtain a sufficient number of responses from a single mailing.

4. Questionnaires were given to print-side graduating seniors only. Radio-television majors were excluded. Mailed questionnaires were sent only to those persons who were believed to be pursuing a news-editorial journalism career.

5. When used, the word "pre-grad" means a graduating journalism student from either Kansas State University or Kansas University. The words "grad," or "working newsperson," is a graduate of 10 or fewer years past from either K-State or KU.

Procedures for Treating Data

The tenability of the hypotheses of this study was tested by treating them statistically in the following manner:

The research hypotheses were restated in the null form for statistical treatment. Data for each subject were punched on cards and computations were made by the Data Processing Center at Kansas State University.

As a test for independence an item analysis was conducted through use of the chi square statistical method. This statistical treatment was applied to the hypotheses for which quantitative data were gathered.

A chi square table was used to determine independence. The null hypotheses were rejected at the .05 level or above.

For clarity and brevity in presentation, data for each area of concern were presented in tabular form, using actual percentages of responses given to each item.

Descriptive information volunteered by respondents to the instrument(s) was analyzed to ascertain whether any trends were apparent, as related to the various subgroupings that were delineated.

Conclusions, implications, and recommendations were formulated consistent with the data collected.

Method

The purpose of this study was to probe perceived vs. real world attitudes of Kansas journalists. To accomplish this, a 61-item questionnaire was administered

to graduating print-side journalism students at Kansas State University and Kansas University. Respondents included graduates from K-State for seven semesters, from May 1975 through May, 1977 and graduates from KU for six semesters, from May, 1975 through January, 1977. K-State and KU have the only ACEJ-accredited news-editorial journalism programs in Kansas.

A questionnaire containing the same 61 items (reworded for appropriateness) was sent to news-editorial graduates of 10 years past from KU and K-State. (The original design of this study proposed a pre-test, post-test. This was abandonded because of the low numbers of responses due to attrition from news-editorial jobs, difficulty in keeping track of graduates and other factors.)

To formulate the questionnaire the authors drew on their own experiences as journalism graduates and subsequent news professionals. Additional valuable input came from colleagues and news professionals and from information gleaned from current professional periodicals, books and related studies.

A pilot study was conducted to determine the validity of the various items of the instrument. A panel of 15 experts was selected for this purpose. Each judge was selected because he or she was deemed to be especially knowledgeable in this area. Responses were received from 11 of the 15 judges. Only minor changes were suggested in the format and wording of the instrument. These were incorporated into the final instrument.

There were nine areas of concern in this study. These were (1) use of copy written by reporters, (2) relationship with staff and editors, (3) ethics and professionalism, (4) pay and fringe benefits, (5) relationship with management, (6) status of the journalist on the paper and in the community, (7) job performance, (8) philosophy of the publication and (9) job satisfaction.

Items were randomed ordered in the final questionnaire to guard against possible respondent bias.

Total N for the study was 425. This included 212 responses from graduating seniors--both K-State and KU (K-State, 80; KU, 132); and 213 responses from graduates who completed a questionnaire (K-State, 97; KU, 117). There were 229 men and 196 women included in the total N.

The instrument was distributed over a three-year period to graduating journalism seniors at both schools. A great majority of seniors returned the completed questionnaire. Final tabulation does not represent 100 percent participation, however.

An intense, painstaking effort was made to identify graduates from both schools who were working in a news-editorial capacity (newspapers). Only these persons were sent a questionnaire. A return-addressed stamped envelope was enclosed. Questionnaires were mailed during the spring of 1977.

Many questionnaires were returned marked "address unknown." Other graduates reported they did not fill out the instrument for various reasons: "Never worked in news-editorial job," "attending graduate school," "left newspaper after three months," "unemployed," and numerous other reasons.

While a second mailing would have undoubtedly produced a few additional responses, it was decided that for the purposes of this exploratory study a sufficient number of responses had been received from a single mailing. A follow-up mailing, therefore, was not made.

Results

The primary hypotheses were that there would be a significant difference in how graduating K-State and KU journalists perceived their profession and how they and other recent Kansas journalism graduates found it to be in reality. Of the nine hypotheses investigated--all relevant to the news-editorial sequence--data supported all primary hypotheses but one: job satisfaction--journalists perceived they would be happy in their jobs and on six of eight items related to job satisfaction found the rewards they had anticipated.

Significant chi square values of more than .0000 ($P<.0000$) were reached for 35 of the 61 items studied. Eight items reached values of .0008 ($P<.0008$) or better. Only 10 items did not reach a significance level of .05 ($P<.05$) or better.

Generally speaking, one could conclude from the data gathered that Kansas journalists find the real world to be vastly different from the way they as students perceived it would be.

The tables with percentages of responses recorded for each item in each category are self-explanatory. No attempt was made to determine why a person responded in the way he/she did. This exploratory study was concerned only with the degree to which a person agreed with or disagreed with a statement.

1. USE OF COPY WRITTEN BY REPORTERS. Three of the eight items in this category (5b, 10b, 16) have to do with editing of copy (See Table 1). Graduating journalists expected their writing to be harshly criticized. They thought editors would be tough and demanding. What they found, apparently, was just the opposite.

Reporters discovered they have far more autonomy than pre-grads expected would be the case (35, 14). And they learned that what they write is used, more than prospective journalists anticipated (19, 19, 32). All items in this category were statistically significant ($P<.0000$).

TABLE 1

Percentage of responses concerning

Perceived vs. Real World Use of Copy Written by Reporters*						
Questionnaire Item (See Appendix A)	SA	A	N	D	SD	** Two Groups
5B. When I write something which is unsatisfactory, it will be/is harshly criticized.	20	34	29	13	4	Pre-Grad (N=212)
	12	11	22	33	22	Grad (N=120)
10B. My stories will be/are almost always used as I submit them with very little editing.	6	15	21	31	28	Pre-Grad (N=205)
	49	30	11	3	7	Grad (N=109)

(continued)

TABLE 1 (cont.)

Questionnaire Item (See Appendix A)	SA	A	N	D	SD	** Two Groups
14. When I am on a breaking story that requires time for investigation, I will be/am released from my regular beat assignments.	10	31	23	26	10	Pre-Grad (N=204)
	27	22	11	17	23	Grad (N=90)
16. My stories will be/are almost always greatly changed by editing.	3	10	32	39	17	Pre-Grad (N=205)
	2	4	11	16	68	Grad (N=108)
18. If my stories have news value they will be/are published.	32	42	17	6	3	Pre-Grad (N=203)
	71	20	5	1	2	Grad (N=98)
19. Controversial stories of mine will be/are published if I can prove they are truthful, accurate & fair.	27	41	19	8	5	Pre-Grad (N=203)
	54	22	12	2	9	Grad (N=90)
32. Editorials I write will be/are used.	3	15	42	23	18	Pre-Grad (N=200)
	21	16	25	4	34	Grad (N=71)
35. I will have/have a voice in choosing what I want to cover.	5	25	29	25	17	Pre-Grad (N=203)
	43	36	13	5	4	Grad (N=112)

*percentages rounded
**SA=strongly agree; SD=strongly disagree

2. RELATIONSHIP WITH STAFF AND EDITORS. Reporters found fellow newspersons to be helpful, quick to compliment their efforts and unthreatened by them (24, 26, 25--see Table 2). Working newspersons did not find the critique sessions pre-grads expected (17). They found their editors and/or publishers to be more complimentary than pre-grads expected them to be. All items in this category were statistically significant ($P < .0001$).

TABLE 2

Percentage of responses concerning

Perceived vs. Real World Relationships with Staff, Editors, etc.*						
Questionnaire Item (See Appendix A)	SA	A	N	D	SD	** Two Groups
17. The news staff will have/has regular weekly meetings to discuss total performance for the period.	10	33	28	19	10	Pre-Grad (N=205)
	20	5	14	19	43	Grad (N=101)

(continued)

TABLE 2 (cont.)

Questionnaire Item (See Appendix A)	SA	A	N	D	SD	** Two Groups
24. Fellow newspersons will make/make an effort to be helpful to me.	23	47	20	6	4	Pre-Grad (N=204)
	53	27	17	2	1	Grad (N=118)
25. Fellow newspersons will feel/are threatened by me and my ideas.	3	11	23	41	23	Pre-Grad (N=203)
	2	10	14	26	48	Grad (N=116)
26. When I write a good story my colleagues will be/are quick to congratulate me.	7	27	38	20	8	Pre-Grad (N=203)
	34	32	27	3	4	Grad (N=115)
27. When I write a good story my editor and/or publisher will be/ is quick to compliment me.	10	32	31	20	8	Pre-Grad (N=203)
	29	36	16	11	9	Grad (N=112)

*percentages rounded
**SA=strongly agree; SD=strongly disagree

3. PROFESSIONALISM AND ETHICAL PRACTICES. On the three items related to keeping up with the profession (4, 5, 6--Table 3) responses revealed that graduating seniors expected more encouragement to keep abreast of the profession than is the case in the real world. There was agreement on items 7 and 37, "involvements in demonstrations..." and "accepting nothing of value from news sources..." These items were not statistically significant ($P<.13$ and $P<.62$, respectively). The final two items (38, 39), related to paying admission to news events and moonlighting, showed a definite bi-modal distribution of responses among working journalists. (This can be noted in a number of responses to a greater or lesser degree.) One is led to believe that there are a number of newspapers doing things the right(?) or wrong(?) way and a number of newspapers that are doing just the opposite.

TABLE 3

Percentage of responses concerning

Perceived vs. Real World Attitudes towards Professionalism and Ethical Practices*						
Questionnaire Item (See Appendix A)	SA	A	N	D	SD	** Two Groups
4. I will pay/pay my own way to professional meetings.	14	17	28	20	21	Pre-Grad (N=211)
	14	8	20	14	44	Grad (N=133)

TABLE 3 (cont.)

Questionnaire Item (See Appendix A)	SA	A	N	D	SD	** Two Groups
5. I will keep/keep abreast of the profession by attending professional meetings whenever possible.	29	32	27	9	2	Pre-Grad (N=212)
	18	25	31	16	10	Grad (N=134)
6. I will keep/keep abreast of the profession by reading current journalistic periodicals.	43	32	16	8	2	Pre-Grad (N=212)
	24	29	27	12	8	Grad (N=136)
7. I will avoid/avoid active involvement...which might compromise my ability to report and edit without prejudice.	17	18	20	22	25	Pre-Grad (N=212)
	10	11	28	23	29	Grad (N=123)
37. I will be/am expected to accept nothing of value from news sources or other outsiders.	24	23	22	20	11	Pre-Grad (N=202)
	25	19	24	15	16	Grad (N=104)
38. My publication will insist/insists on paying regular admission prices for any events I'm assigned to cover.	22	28	29	11	11	Pre-Grad (N=203)
	27	20	15	8	30	Grad (N=96)
39. I will be/am discouraged from any outside employment (moonlighting, handling publicity for group or candidate, etc.)	16	26	27	22	8	Pre-Grad (N=208)
	23	14	20	17	25	Grad (N=118)

*percentages rounded
**SA=strongly agreed; SD=strongly disagree

4. PAY, FRINGE BENEFITS. On the seven items in this category only one (43--Table 4) proved be not significant ($P<.36$). Pre-grads and grads had the same opinions regarding the financial benefits of a journalism career. Only 9% expressed strong agreement with this statement. There was mild disagreement with Item 42 (P .007), with pre-grads anticipating a slightly more gloomy picture than it turns out to be.

There was a marked disparity ($P<.0000$) in responses given to the remaining five items (4b, 5b, 7b, 8b, 9b). Graduates found they were reimbursed for various job-related expenses to a greater degree than pre-grads thought they would be (6b, 7b, 8b).

Additional observations: A large number of papers do not pay for overtime work (4b). Reporters anticipated receiving merit pay increases to a greater extent than graduates are finding is the practice. Note the bi-modal or polarized responses to these items. Does it mean that some papers are being very fair in their financial compensation to reporters? And that some papers are being unfair?

TABLE 4

Percentages of responses concerning

Perceived vs. Real World Attitudes towards Pay, Fringe Benefits*						
Questionnaire Item (See Appendix A)	SA	A	N	D	SD	** Two Groups
4B. I will receive/receive overtime pay for all hours worked beyond 40 hours per week.	8	8	12	37	35	Pre-Grads (N=215)
	16	2	4	11	67	Grads (N=141)
6B. I will be/am reimbursed for meals I have to pay for while on a story.	11	19	26	26	18	Pre-Grads (N=208)
	43	13	14	7	24	Grads (N=117)
7B. I will be/am reimbursed for "in town" expenses.	9	19	22	28	22	Pre-Grads (N=213)
	47	9	7	8	29	Grads (N=131)
8B. I will be/am reimbursed for any travel expenses which I feel are job related.	23	36	16	18	7	Pre-Grads (N=214)
	55	14	15	6	10	Grads (N=135)
9B. I will/do receive regular pay increases based on merit.	27	39	21	10	4	Pre-Grads (N=215)
	37	17	16	11	19	Grads (N=139)
42. The immediate financial benefits of a journalism career will be/ are very good.	2	5	19	32	42	Pre-Grads (N=213)
	8	11	19	28	34	Grads (N=156)
43. The long range financial benefits of a journalism career are very promising.	9	24	28	27	13	Pre-Grads (N=214)
	9	24	24	23	21	Grads (N=155)

*percentages rounded
**SA=strongly agree; SD=strongly disagree

5. RELATIONSHIPS WITH MANAGEMENT. Libel insurance (20, 21--Table 5) was an area where pre-grads were mostly undecided in their responses. Working journalists reported management had little interest in libel insurance for employees.

Pre-grads would be surprised at the extent to which working journalists are asked to become involved in policy-making functions (15). And many will be surprised at the extent to which working journalists reported their superiors were interested in hearing of concepts learned in college courses (2b). Items 15, 20 and 21 were highly significant ($P<.0000$). Item 2b was also significant ($P<.007$).

TABLE 5

Percentage of responses concerning

Perceived vs. Real World Relationships with Management*						
Questionnaire Item (See Appendix A)	SA	A	N	D	SD	**Two Groups
26. My superior will be/is interested in hearing of new concepts and practices I learned in college journalism courses.	7	14	33	26	20	Pre-Grad (N=215)
	18	18	24	18	23	Grad (N=143)
15. I sit/will sit in on periodic policy-decision meetings.	9	23	30	26	12	Pre-Grad (N=210)
	27	22	16	10	24	Grad (N=135)
20. Management will encourage/ encourages me to take out libel insurance.	5	13	47	19	15	Pre-Grad (N=202)
	2	0	7	9	82	Grad (N=91)
21. Management will pay/pays the cost of my libel insurance.	9	15	43	16	17	Pre-Grad (N=201)
	16	3	9	9	65	Grad (N=71)

*percentages rounded
**SA=strongly agree; SD=strongly disagree

6. STATUS OF THE JOURNALIST ON THE PAPER AND IN THE COMMUNITY. By a far greater margin than pre-grads anticipated, working newspersons found they have a rather high status on the publication they work for (1b, 34, 36--Table 6).

The remaining five items in this category relate to status and involvement of the journalist in the community. Working journalists found they enjoyed a higher status than pre-grads predicted would be the case (3b). It was interesting that not a single pre-grad answered "strongly agree" to this statement.

While items 11 and 12 are statistically significant ($P<.03$) difference in responses is in the degree of agreement-disagreement, rather than differences of opinion.

Working newspersons do not feel they are given the degree of esteem that pre-grads thought would be the case ($44-P<.0000$). But graduates do believe, more strongly than pre-grads, that journalism provides the opportunity to do something worthwhile for society.

Note that responses on items 3b and 44 are almost opposite. It would appear that when answering in the context of "I" (3b) journalists (especially pre-grads) do not have a very high concept of self. When relating to the profession as a whole, journalists responded that the public assigns high esteem to the profession as a whole. Pre-grads perceived higher status than grads have found to be the case.

TABLE 6

Percentage of responses concerning

Perceived vs. Real World Attitudes toward Status of Journalist on Paper and in the Community*						
Questionnaire Item (See Appendix A)	SA	A	N	D	SD	** Two Groups
1B. I will be/am the only person on the staff with a four-year degree in journalism.	5	4	11	25	55	Pre-Grad (N=214)
	29	3	2	5	61	Grad (N=146)
3B. I will have/have a rather high status in the community becuase I work as a journalist.	0	20	40	29	11	Pre-Grad (N=213)
	11	26	37	12	12	Grad (N=139)
11. I will be/am able to do things in my job that will bring about positive change in the community.	11	32	38	15	5	Pre-Grad (N=214)
	25	20	35	11	9	Grad (N=130)
12. I will be/am recognized in the community as a person with the potential for bringing about change.	8	32	34	21	6	Pre-Grad (N=214)
	15	24	35	14	11	Grad (N=127)
34. My opinions regarding news coverage will be/is solicited.	4	20	39	23	14	Pre-Grad (N=198)
	27	34	13	13	14	Grad (N=109)

(continued)

TABLE 6 (cont.)

Questionnaire Item (See Appendix A)	SA	A	N	D	SD	** Two Groups
36. I will have/have a voice in hiring and promotions.	1	5	21	35	37	Pre-Grad (N=209)
	15	12	11	17	45	Grad (N=124)
44. High esteem will be/is accorded journalists by the public.	27	43	24	5	1	Pre-Grad (N=214)
	19	29	34	14	4	Grad (N=155)
45. Journalist provides the opportunity to do something worthwhile for society.	2	25	46	21	7	Pre-Grad (N=213)
	21	29	33	14	3	Grad (N=153)

*percentages rounded
**SA=strongly agree; SD=strongly disagree

7. JOB PERFORMANCE. On four items in this category (1, 2, 3, 8--Table 7) which was concerned mostly with how much and what kind of writing is expected of the reporter there was not really much difference in types of responses. The statistical significance is noted chiefly in the degree of agreement or disagreement. There was very little changing of basic response. Of the four items only item 8 was not significant ($P < .06$).

The same interpretation can be made regarding Item 10 ($P < .02$).

And to an extent the same occurred with items 9, 31, and 13 ($P < .0007$, $< .0000$, and < 0000 respectively). Responses on the disagree side were approximately the same, with stronger disagreement noted from graduates. There were more responses in the pre-grad-neutral column than in the grad-neutral column.

TABLE 7

Percentage of responses concerning

Perceived vs. Real World Attitudes Related to Job Performance*						
Questionnaire Item (See Appendix A)	SA	A	N	D	SD	** Two Groups
1. I will write/write about three stories per day.	8	25	29	24	14	Pre-Grad (N=202)
	16	10	15	19	40	Grad (N=106)
2. I will write/write stories which originate from my beat only.	3	10	14	45	28	Pre-Grad (N=204
	10	5	15	18	52	Grad (N=106)

(continued)

TABLE 7 (cont.)

Questionnaire Item (See Appendix A)	SA	A	N	D	SD	** Two Groups
3. I will be/am resourceful, working on stories that take me beyond my beat assignment.	34	35	14	11	6	Pre-Grad (N=206)
	51	23	12	6	8	Grad (N=108)
8. I will write/write investigative/ interpretive/in depth stories.	20	32	30	10	7	Pre-Grad (N=201)
	27	27	20	12	13	Grad (N=114)
9. I will enter/enter samples of my work in contests for awards and prizes.	11	26	35	16	12	Pre-Grad (N=208)
	28	18	26	13	16	Grad (N=126)
10. I will stay/stay with the publication or organization for at least two years.	26	31	26	11	6	Pre-Grad (N=211)
	36	19	25	8	12	Grad (N=134)
31. I will be/am encouraged to write editorials.	3	13	36	28	20	Pre-Grad (N=203)
	13	12	19	12	44	Grad (N=93)
13. I will be/am encouraged to write opinion columns.	4	12	33	31	21	Pre-Grad (N=205)
	19	11	15	18	37	Grad (N=105)

*percentages rounded
**SA=strongly agree; SD=strongly disagree

8. PHILOSOPHY OF THE PUBLICATION. The six items in this category (Table 8) were all statistically significant ($P < .0000$).

Graduates have stronger opinions regarding their involvement in the political philosophy of the publication than pre-grads--items 22, 23. There was very little difference in opinions per se; differences were mostly in degree.

For items 28, 29, 30, concerned with policy of the publication, responses on the agree side were approximately the same. Graduates marked the strongly disagree response more than pre-grads, while the latter group tended to choose a neutral response more often.

On the final item (33) grads found that advertisers had less effect on gatekeeping decisions than pre-grads thought advertisers would have.

TABLE 8

Percentage of responses concerning

Perceived vs. Real World Attitudes Toward Philosophy of Publication*						
Questionnaire Item (See Appendix A)	SA	A	N	D	SD	** Two Groups
22. When my political views differ from those of my superiors they will encourage/encourage me to express my viewpoint editorially.	4	14	27	35	20	Pre-Grad (N=203)
	9	8	25	10	48	Grad (N=88)
23. My publication will have/has a political philosophy that reflects management's viewpoint only.	6	28	29	23	14	Pre-Grad (N=208)
	30	16	19	17	19	Grad (N=107)
28. My publication will have/has its own, formal statement of policy.	14	31	30	18	6	Pre-Grad (N=201)
	27	15	11	22	25	Grad (N=104)
29. My publication will adhere/adheres to the code of ethics adopted by SDX.	22	36	31	5	5	Pre-Grad (N=202)
	31	18	24	2	26	Grad (N=85)
30. My publication will adhere/adheres to the code of ethics adopted by APME.	20	35	35	6	6	Pre-Grad (N=200)
	33	16	25	3	22	Grad (N=67)
33. Advertisers will have/have little or no effect on the gatekeeping decisions made by management.	10	15	24	32	20	Pre-Grad (N=208)
	29	13	16	17	25	Grad (N=109)

*percentages rounded
**SA=strongly agree; SD=strongly disagree

9. JOB SATISFACTION. There was very little disagreement between pre-grads and grads on five items (40, 41, 46, 47, 50--Table 7) of the category related to job satisfaction. Apparently, the factors which attracted journalism majors to the profession are the same ones which cause them to enjoy working as journalists. None of these items reached statistical significance ($P<.05$).

On the remaining three items working newspersons reported their jobs make them feel important, more than pre-grads thought would be the case. Likewise, working journalists felt a greater sense of power from their jobs and they liked the working hours of journalists. Responses by graduates to the latter two items were bell-shaped. These two items were significant ($P<.05$).

TABLE 9

Percentage of responses concerning

Perceived vs. Real World Attitudes towards Job Satisfaction*						
Questionnaire Item (See Appendix A)	SA	A	N	D	SD	** Two Groups
40. Journalism affords an outlet for my creativity.	43	41	9	3	3	Pre-Grad (N=212)
	55	31	10	3	1	Grad (N=156)
41. I like to work with people.	52	33	11	1	2	Pre-Grad (N=214)
	55	28	14	2	1	Grad (N=159)
46. I like to write.	53	28	11	6	2	Pre-Grad (N=214)
	61	26	10	2	2	Grad (N=157)
47. I like the excitement of meeting important people.	39	35	20	4	3	Pre-Grad (N=214)
	47	30	13	5	5	Grad (N=154)
50. It offers a wide range of job opportunities.	36	35	16	7	7	Pre-Grad (N=214)
	47	27	17	6	3	Grad (N=155)
51. I like the working hours of journalists.	8	11	31	26	24	Pre-Grad (N=214)
	10	26	27	16	21	Grad (N=154)
52. It gives me a sense of power.	8	22	29	23	20	Pre-Grad (N=213)
	16	26	28	16	14	Grad (N=153)
53. It makes me feel important	9	33	34	10	13	Pre-Grad (N=213)
	20	35	28	11	7	Grad (N=153)

*percentages rounded
**SA=strongly agree; SD=strongly disagree

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS (Tables 10, 11). The statistic that everyone even remotely connected with journalism has become acutely aware of is the continued high attrition from news-editorial position. Note especially responses under column headings for Reporting, Public Relations and Other.

TABLE 10

Percentage of response to

What Job Do/Did You See Yourself Holding Upon Graduation?								
	Advertising	Magazine	Reporting	Editing	Photo	Pub Rel	Other	Total N
Pre-Grad	19.2	10.1	23.2	5.1	2.0	15.2	25.3	198
Grad	14.4	13.3	33.8	3.9	3.9	14.4	17.2	180
								378

TABLE 11

Percentage of responses to

What Job Do You See Yourself Holding in Five Years?								
	Advertising	Magazine	Reporting	Editing	Photo	Pub Rel	Other	Total N
Pre-Grad	18.7	13.2	12.6	10.4	1.1	21.4	22.5	182
Grad	8.6	9.1	9.7	8.6	4.0	19.4	40.6	175
								357

Additional Comments from Graduates

As is often the case in an exploratory study, the additional comments from journalism graduates were among the most interesting data received. Some representative comments follow, grouped by subject matter.

Most of the comments dealt with the quality/usefulness of the education received at the University of Kansas/Kansas State University and suggestions for improvement. In the comments cited, the specific school or department is not identified.

Many of the comments were positive. For example:

> My journalism training . . . gave me a head start in newspaper jobs in the Midwest and on the West Coast. I feel strongly that I was better trained than other journalists who were J-grads of other schools. I think the reason was . . . emphasis on practical training at the expense of theory.

> . . . I worked about six years on daily newspapers, retiring to become a full-time homemaker and mother. I did retain skills from reporter days, doing newsletters for a couple of organizations. . . Just recently, I've begun free-lance writing . . . . My journalism education . . . has served me well.

> I am involved in full-time Christian work, which is a far cry from [journalism], but I constantly use my communication skills in writing and speaking in my ministry.

> I feel that _____ did a fine job in preparing me for my present position.

> A few words about the journalism [school/department] -- it's the <u>greatest</u>. I'm glad I attended -- learned a lot from a wonderful faculty.

I feel very strongly that I learned far, far more in j-school than I could have learned with an equivalent amount of experience. Where I work I am one of the few people with a journalism degree -- even though we are in the news business -- and company calls on me frequently for information I have because of j-school. These are not usually editorial problems, incidentally, but advertising, circulation, promotion or production problems. Our situation is different from most in that we are developing a number of new publications from scratch, but I couldn't do it without the broad background I got at _____.

Some comments, while generally positive, included suggestions for improvement:

Print journalists should be REQUIRED to take at least one class in advertising, magazine, newspaper editing and reporting, photography, production and layout.

Instead of sitting in a mixed media class for a semester their senior year, students should go watch radio and t.v. and newspaper people in action.

They should be REQUIRED to cover stories totally opposite of their beats. . . .

I'm beginning to realize the importance of my journalism training. Everything I learned was relevant, even though I might not have thought so at the time . . . .

On the whole, I think my training at _____ provided a stable journalistic foundation for my career. One point: I think it would have been worthwhile to have had at least one course in the required core from each sequence. I didn't want a career in advertising or broadcasting, but now it appears a taste of those fields would have come in handy.

My only complaint with the _____ school is that Public Relations is looked on as a bastard offshoot of "professional journalism." That's a mistake; some of the most talented journalists I've met are in public relations. There are also more good paying jobs available in this field. News writers can have a holier-than-thou attitude if they like but very few PR jobs start at $125 a week.

And some respondents were less than satisfied with the journalism education they had received:

Wow! Had you sent this to me last year at this time, my answers would be exactly opposite. I was in public relations with the government. A piece of unsolicited advice for journalism students -- it's good experience to have in your background, but hell to go thru.

If I had my schooling to do over again, I would not major in journalism. I'd major in something useful (sorry . . .) and minor in it.

Would have strongly benifited [sic] from an actual newspaper working experience during, for example, Christmas break . . . I thought I knew everything when I graduated.

I don't think I was trained for this job as well as I might have been -- or maybe I was trained too well. Everything we did in j-school seemed to be aimed at preparing us only for jobs on the New York Times or National Observer or at least the KC Star -- not he Podunk Daily Graphic, etc.

I am not in the journalism profession. I am somewhat disappointed. I urge you to encourage the students to take as many writing courses and to take many practicum classes . . . . The theory if fine, but it doesn't always prepare you for the "real world."

It's a long hard climb . . . experience in writing (for [the college daily], for example) or at least anything that may be looked upon by a future employer as "experience" . . . it was my biggest drawback in getting a job (a good one, at least, in the field) fast.

It should be made mandatory for any journalism student to go thru' some kind of apprenticeship, ie. working in radio station, paper, PR office, advertising . . . ANYTHING.

In fact, why not a class where format resembles a trade school, perhaps?

I am not directly involved with journalism at this time because [of] the poor journalist background I received at _____. I was more interested in journalism as a business. I enjoyed the writing, but realized early that my potential as a writer was limited by my lack of ability. I was stifeled [sic] in my search for the type of journalism I wanted to pursue. I was limited in the number of business school hours I could take. I wanted to learn more about advertising, but could not because my journalism hours were limited to my major, news-editorial, because I wanted to get a complete background in that field. The j-school offered no help when I went to look for summer employment, even though I did find journalism jobs on my own. Journalism school at _____ is only benificial [sic] for the exceptional students. The faculty is excellent, but only for the chosen few. The journalism [school/department] has outgrown the [college daily]. Unless you were one of best writers on campus, you had no hope to get your article published . . . .

My (un) asked for advise [sic]:

1. On the job training for three months is better than four semesters of j-school. Contact (person to person) every newspaper in the state and make them feel it is their responsibility to hire a summer itern . . . . A reporter can learn to cover car races as well as politics. He can also learn how to sell advertising, run a press, typeset, sweep floors, etc.
2. Take the time to acknowledge the work of reporters in the Reporting II class. Many students work their fannies off trying to get a good story in on time. 99% of the time they are never published. If their [sic] is lack of room in the paper, it still does some good to compliment the student for his hard work rather than throwing the work in the trash can.

Not surprisingly, a number of comments dealt with salaries in journalism:

I really have only good things to say about my own "real world." That's excepting the pay, of course.

I'm not getting rich by any means, but it's a fast-moving, exciting business.

My word of warning is not to expect to earn a decent wage working for any non-guild newspaper. As union members' salaries continue to increase, low and medium level professional salaries fall further behind . . . . A two-year bus driver earns more in Chicago than a top-paid suburban Chicago journalist. A five-year plumber makes more than a writer with five years experience and a four-year college degree. Hours are long (non-guild papers seldom pay 100 per cent overtime), the pay is bad, the pressure to be accurate and competitive is intense and stardom is a dream.

Starting salaries are lousy, but prognosis for future (3-5 years) is encouraging.

I would sincerely prefer a job directly related to my major -- news-editorial and magazine. However, in order to support my husband in medical school, I found it necessary to find employment in an area highly rewarding financially and one in which my hours were pre-determined and stable.

For the most part, only two aspects have disillusioned me about the newspaper world -- the pay, and the relationship with advertisers.

I find the salary . . . is barely enough to live on. And what's worse, I'm paid less than college graduates in any other field I know. . . This isn't saying I'm paid less than others in the field. From what I've gathered at conferences, I'm fabulously paid in comparison [to those on] other newspapers . . . . The situation is depressing.

I'm also slightly disgusted by the relationship of the newspaper to the advertisers. I realize we depend on them for our livelihood, but always cringe when a non-newsworthy event becomes suddenly newsworthy when the sponsor buys an ad.

Still, I wouldn't change jobs with anyone. It's still a thrill to write a story I know is good; I enjoy the ego trip of having everyone in the county know who I am.

I have reached a plateau in the business that has made me painfully aware of the financial limits. As a writer in sports . . .I must be among the top .05% in the country in ability. Yet, I can't buy a house or own a second car or live like a professional should be able to. It is disillusioning, and I am looking elsewhere. No-one ever let me in on this. Now I'm in New York, have made a bit of a name for myself in a year's time, and I'm making $2,000-$3,000 more than sanitation workers. That's pitiful, I think. Tell the students what's ahead. (Note: From a grad with seven years of sports writing experience on large metropolitan papers.)

A few repondents commented on ethics and professionalism:

My job as a reporter is made more difficult because my boss is president of the town's medical development corporation, a member of the industrial development corporation and others. He protects his own interests, editing facts I consider important out of my stories.

My work is nearly always criticized by the society page writer, a woman how has been on the staff 30 years and likes to throw her weight

around (all 250 pounds of it). However, she has had no formal training and usually doesn't know what she's talking about. I could do my job a lot better if the boss would get her off my back. . . .

I find when faced with a decision with ethical consideration, I use the ethics preached to me in J-school as my yardstick.

I have found little interest in codes of ethics, professional journalism groups, etc. by working, non-management journalists.

It's hard to operate under an editor or other superior whose only job training came from operating a restaurant and surviving Viet Nam. My Ed/Pub is in the newspaper business not because he is interested in in journalism, but because he inherited the business and he is interested in money. I'm sure there are many other J-grads in this frustrating position and just as confused as I am.

Management at my paper has no strong commitment to good ethical practices. What you instilled in me as a student has served me as the only guide to professional conduct I can rely on. And, I think I have been able to maintain my own standards, despite management, because of what I learned in school.

Only one graduate commented on hostility from staff members having little or no formal training. One encouraged any graduate interested in really learning the profession to begin on a small newspaper. In some cases, the "comments" were requests for advice:

I think I'm at a point where I could either stay where I am or look elsewhere. What is the proper procedure in looking around?

Summary and Discussion

There were distinct differences in the way graduating Kansas journalists perceived the world they were about to enter and real world perceptions of Kansas graduates in news editorial positions. The differences, however, often were in the degree of agreement or disagreement, rather than in significant difference of opinion.

In many areas working journalists found the real world better than pre-grads perceived it would be. Working newspersons found they had more autonomy, a better working relationship with colleagues and management, a higher status on the paper and in the community, and in general, a better working environment than pre-grads expected.

Both groups expressed dissatisfaction with pay and fringe benefits. Among professionals responding fewer than 10% thought they would be in news-editorial jobs five years hence.

Graduates reported that management was largely unconcerned about ethics, codes, libel and professional affiliations.

There was differences concerning "status of the journalist in the community" and "esteem accorded the journalism profession." The pre-grad perceived his profession highly, but paradoxically, did not assign himself a high status as a member of that profession. Professionals responded in the same direction but to a lesser degree.

There was noted a bimodal, or polarized distribution of responses to many items. While it cannot be stated definitively, the supposition is that there are a number of newspapers doing things opposite from one another, either right or wrong.

The frightening bit of information that jumps out of the data is the fact that newspapers apparently will use just about anything a reporter submits for

publication. There is very little criticism of effort. A minimum amount is done to critique a person's writing, or to show him or her how to become a better reporter.

That brings this study full circle, to the thought that prompted it in the first place: "Are teachers educating journalists realistically for today's, or tomorrow's newspaper?" Are we harking to a traditional viewpoint of journalism--one that may or may not have been--that there is "out there" a hard-nosed, dedicated editor who is going to hammer and fashion young journalists into tempered professionals?

If he ever was "out there" in significant numbers, he doesn't appear to be any more. If he's not there, and if newspapers on balance are more business-oriented than journalistic in their philosophies, are teachers realistically preparing journalists for news-editoral positions?

Or, to return to a question posed earlier, should journalism educators take the idealistic, rather than the realistic, route -- aim high, instill ethical standards and professionalism, reverence for the English language and devotion to accuracy, in the hope that in time we can supply those "hard-nosed, dedicated editors?"

QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTERED TO GRADUATING SENIORS

Instructions

Following are statements that relate to the broad field of professional journalism. Conditions may or may not be the way each statement implies. We are interested in learning what you think conditions are like on the job. Answer each item with reference to what you think conditions are--not what you think they should be, or what you have been told they are.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement by circling 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 with 1 indicating that you strongly agree (SA), and 5 indicating that you strongly disagree with the statement (SD). (Please attempt to answer all questions)

ON THE JOB MY SUPERIOR WILL EXPECT THAT

1. I write about three stories per day.	Strongly Agree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Disagree
2. I write stories which originate from my beat only.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
3. I be resourceful, following leads that take me beyond my beat assignment.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
4. I pay my own way to professional meetings.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
5. I keep abreast of the profession by attending professional meetings whenever possible.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
6. I keep abreast of the profession by reading current journalistic periodicals.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
7. I avoid active involvement in such things as politics, community affairs, demonstrations and social causes which may compromise my ability to report and edit without prejudice.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
8. I write investigative/interpretive/in depth stories.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
9. I enter samples of my work in contests for awards and prizes.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
10. I will stay with the publication for at least two years.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD

ON MY JOB I EXPECT THAT

1B. I will be the only person on the staff with a 4-year degree in journalism.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
2B. My superior will be interested in hearing of new concepts and practices I learned in college journalism courses.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
3B. I will have a rather high status in the community because I work as a journalist.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
4B. I will receive overtime pay for all hours worked beyond 40 hours per week.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD

5B.	I will be reimbursed for meals I have to pay for while on a story.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
6B.	I will be reimbursed for "in-town" travel expenses.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
7B.	I will be reimbursed for any travel expenses that I feel are job connected.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
8B.	I will receive regular pay increases based on merit.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
9B.	I will be able to make the world a better place to live in.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
10B.	I will be able to do things in my job that will bring about positive change in the community.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
11.	I will be recognized in the community as a person with the potential for bringing about change.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
12.	I will be encouraged to write opinion columns.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
13.	When I am on a breaking story that requires time for investigation, I will be released from my regular beat assignments.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
14.	I will sit in on periodic policy-decision meetings.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
15.	The news staff will have regular weekly meetings to discuss total performance for that period.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
16.	If my stories have news value they will be published always, regardless of injury to public officials, friends of the publisher, etc.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
17.	Controversial stories of mine will be published if I can prove they are truthful, accurate and fair.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
18.	The publication will encourage me to take out libel insurance.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
19.	The publication will pay the cost of my libel insurance.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
20.	When my politics differ from the publisher's he will encourage me to express editorially a different viewpoint.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
21.	The publication will have a political philosophy that reflects management's viewpoint only.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
22.	Fellow newspersons will make an effort to be helpful to me.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD

23. Fellow newspersons will be threatened by me and my new ideas. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

24. Newsroom personnel will reflect a democratic attitude of mutual support and respect. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

25. When I write a good story my news colleagues will be quick to compliment me. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

26. When I write a good story my editor and/or publisher will be quick to compliment me. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

27. My publication will have its own, formal statement of policy. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

28. My publication will adhere to the code of ethics adopted by the Society for Professional Journalists. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

29. My publication will adhere to the APME model code of ethics. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

30. I will be encouraged to write editorials. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

31. Editorials I write will be used. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

32. Advertisers will have little or no effect on the gatekeeping decisions made by management. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

33. My opinions regarding news coverage and policy will be solicited. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

34. I will have a voice in choosing what I want to cover. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

35. I will have a voice in hiring/promotions. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

36. I will be expected to accept nothing of value from news sources or other outsiders. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

37. My publication will insist on paying regular admission prices for any events I'm assigned to cover. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

38. I will be discouraged from any outside employment (moonlighting, handling publicity for group or candidate, etc.) SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

I CHOSE TO MAJOR IN JOURNALISM BECAUSE

39. Journalism affords an outlet for my creativity. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

40. I like to work with people. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

41. Of the immediate financial benefits of a journalism career. SA 1 2 3 4 5 SD

42. Of the long-range financial benefits of a journalism career.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
43. Of the high esteem accorded journalists by the public.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
44. Of the opportunity to do something worthwhile for society.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
45. I like to write.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
46. I like the excitement of meeting important people.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
47. I was influenced by my high school teacher.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
48. It seemed like an easy academic major.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
49. It offers a wide range of job opportunities.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
50. I like the working hours of journalists.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
51. It gives me a sense of power.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD
52. It makes me feel important.	SA	1	2	3	4	5	SD